

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 6769

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ID, PT, US

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE HEARINGS ON EAST TIMOR

REF: STATE 116144

1. STRICTLY FROM STANDPOINT US-INDONESIAN RELATIONS IT WOULD, OF COURSE, BE PREFERABLE IF FURTHER HEARINGS ON PAST DEVELOPMENTS IN EAST TIMOR COULD BE AVOIDED. ASSUMING THIS MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE, FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS MAY BE HELPFUL TO DEPARTMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF.

2. AS IMPERFECT AS VISITS TO EAST TIMOR BY MEMBERS OF CODEL WOLFF AND BY STAFF MEMBERS FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE MAY HAVE BEEN FROM THEIR STANDPOINT, INDONESIANS CONSIDER THEY MADE CONSIDERABLE CONCESSION TO US CONGRESSIONAL OPINION IN ARRANGING TOURS. COMMENTS OF CODEL MEMBERS TO EFFECT THEY SAW LITTLE ALTERNATIVE TO INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA HAVE BEEN WELL RECEIVED HERE AND HAVE GENERALLY ENCOURAGED INDONESIANS TO PERMIT FURTHER VISITS, INCLUDING VISITS BY JOURNALISTS.

3. WHILE KNOWLEDGABLE INDONESIAN OFFICIALS WOULD PROBABLY UNDERSTAND CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO RESUMED FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS ON TIMOR, OTHERS, INCLUDING THOSE IN MILITARY WHO WERE NOT TOTALLY HAPPY WITH EARLIER INQUIRY, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 JAKART 06769 241247Z

COULD REACT ADVERSELY AND PRESENT TREND TOWARD FURTHER OPENING OF TERRITORY TO VISITORS AND, PERHAPS, TO INTERNATIONAL RELIEF, COULD BE STALLED.

4. HEARINGS WOULD, OF COURSE, RECEIVE PRESS ATTENTION HERE AND ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION COULD FURTHER INHIBIT GOVERNMENT POLICIES. STRONGEST REACTION WOULD PROBABLY RESULT FROM

COMMITTEE'S HEARING HORTA WHO HAS NOT BEEN IN TERRITORY, WE BELIEVE, SINCE LATE 1975 AND WHO HAS OBVIOUSLY NOTHING FIRST-HAND TO CONTRIBUTE ON CURRENT SITUATION IN TERRITORY. COMMITTEE'S GIVING FURTHER FORUM TO HORTA WOULD CLEARLY BE LOOKED UPON HERE AS ATTEMPT BY COMMITTEE TO INTERVENE IN WHAT IS NOW REGARDED AS INTERNAL INDONESIAN AFFAIR AND TO CHALLENGE INDONESIAN INCORPORATION AT TIME WHEN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS TENDING TOWARD TACIT ACCEPTANCE.

5. DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY STATED ITS POSITION IN EARLIER HEARINGS AND WE PRESUME WOULD NOT BE CALLED UPON AGAIN. IF QUERIES CONCERNING DEPARTMENT'S POSITION ARISE, WE CAN REPLY ON BASIS EARLIER STATEMENTS. WE SEE LITTLE ADVANTAGE TO HAVING DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL PRESENT IN JUXTAPOSITION HORTA IF HE APPEARS.

6. WE PRESUME DEPARTMENT WILL ENLIST HELP OTHER MEMBERS SUB-COMMITTEE IN ARGUING THAT RESUMED HEARINGS, PARTICULARLY WITH HORTA, ARE NOT LIKELY BE HELPFUL IN MOVING INDONESIA TOWARD MORE OPEN AND SATISFACTORY POLICY RE TIMOR. IN THIS CONNECTION, JON HOLSTINE OF CONGRESSMAN J. HERBERT BURKE'S STAFF, WHO ACCOMPANIED CONGRESSWOMAN MEYNER AND JOHN SALZBERG ON TIMOR TRIP, MAY BE HELPFUL.
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